

Why Don't People Believe the Gospel

John 3:17-21

- 17** For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.
- 18** “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.
- 19** And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.
- 20** For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.
- 21** But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God

Introduction:

I was listening to a sermon preached by Paul Washer and he quoted from a book which caught my attention. So I looked it up, found it and read it. It was written by

Blaise Pascal (1623–1662).

French mathematician and Physicist who converted to Christianity wrote a book called

Poinse Thoughts.

The Harvard Classics. 1909–14.

Section III

Of the Necessity of the Wager

In reference to how people can neglect the urgency of eternity... the reality of there inevitable death and the fact that they will meet God. He states:

This carelessness in a matter which concerns themselves, their eternity, their all, moves me more to anger than pity; it astonishes and shocks me; it is to me monstrous. I do not say this out of the pious zeal of a spiritual devotion. I expect, on the contrary, that we ought to have this feeling from principles of human interest and self-love;

We do not require great education of the mind to understand that here is no real and lasting satisfaction; that our pleasures are only vanity; that our evils are infinite; and, lastly, that death, which threatens us every moment, must infallibly place us within a few years under the dreadful necessity of being for ever either annihilated or unhappy.

There is nothing more real than this, nothing more terrible. Be as heroic as we like, that is the end which awaits the noblest life in the world.

“I know not who put me into the world, nor what the world is, not what I myself am. I am in terrible ignorance of everything. I know not what my body is, nor my senses, nor my soul, nor even that part of me which thinks what I say, which reflects on all and on itself, and knows itself no more than the rest.

I see nothing but infinites on all sides, which surround me as an atom, and as a shadow which endures only for an instant and returns no more. All I know is that I must soon die, but what I know least is this very death which I cannot escape.

“As I know not whence I come, so I know not whither I go. I know only that, in leaving this world, I fall forever either into annihilation or into the hands of an angry God, without knowing to which of these two states I shall be for ever assigned. Such is my state, full of weakness and uncertainty. **And from all this I conclude that I ought to spend all the days of my life without caring to inquire into what must happen to me. Perhaps I might find some solution to my doubts,** but I will not take the trouble, nor take a step to seek it; and after treating with scorn those who are concerned with this care, I will go without foresight and without fear to try the great event, and let myself be led carelessly to death, uncertain of the eternity of my future state.”

Nothing is so important to man as his own state, nothing is so formidable to him as eternity; and thus it is not natural that there should be men indifferent to the loss of their existence, and to the perils of everlasting suffering. They are quite different with regard to all other things. They are afraid of mere trifles; they foresee them; they feel them. And this same man who spends so many days and nights in rage and despair for the loss of office, or for some imaginary insult to his honour,

is the very one who knows without anxiety and without emotion that he will lose all by death. It is a monstrous thing to see in the same heart and at the same time this sensibility to trifles and this strange insensibility to the greatest objects. It is an incomprehensible enchantment, and a supernatural slumber,

Before entering into the proofs of the Christian religion, I find it necessary to point out the sinfulness of those men who live in indifference to the search for truth in a matter which is so important to them, and which touches them so nearly.

Of all their errors, this doubtless is the one which most convicts them of foolishness and blindness,

For it is not to be doubted that the duration of this life is but a moment; that the state of death is eternal, whatever may be its nature;

There is nothing clearer than this; and thus, according to the principles of reason, the conduct of men is wholly unreasonable, if they do not take another course.

36

On this point therefore we condemn those who live without thought of the ultimate end of life, who let themselves be guided by their own inclinations and their own pleasures without reflection and without concern, and, as if they could annihilate eternity by turning away their thought from it,

Yet this eternity exists, and death, which must open into it, and threatens them every hour,

Let us imagine a number of men in chains, and all condemned to death, where some are killed each day in the sight of the others, and those who remain see their own fate in that of their fellows, and wait their turn,

looking at each other sorrowfully and without hope. It is an image of the condition of men.”

So with the clear urgency of the matter of the inevitable reality of death and the fact that for the sinner, the most important topic he could ever ponder on or spend time preparing for is his death.

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Have you ever wondered why so many people don't believe the Gospel. Why you believe it and they don't. It seems so clear and true to you but others are not moved or convinced.

How is it that you can have a married couple and one person believes and the other doesn't. Or a father and mother can believe and some of their children do not.

How is it that we can live in an age where the Bible and the claims of the Bible have been proven over and over again to be accurate and truthful.... where science, geography, archaeology, textual studies, and history itself have shown the complete veracity and complete reliability of the Bible, yet millions don't believe.

Hundreds of books and articles have been written on this subject. It has been discussed from historical, evidential, philosophical, psychological, practical, theological, pragmatic, geo-political viewpoints.

Ideas and opinions have been offered from the simple to complex to the profound to the bazaar.

Entire ministries have been built on the conclusions one holds on why or why not someone believes.

Historically the battle between Plagianism, semi-pelagianism, Arminianism and Calvinism has shown the incredible nature of the truth at stake here.

In other words, what you believe about this topic, determines how you handle the Word of God, in your presentation of the Gospel. The reason we have seeker churches, purpose driven ministries, the new rock music approach to ministry with all the attempts to make the church relevant in the lives of young people is directly related to how this question is answered. (Why don't you believe the Gospel.)

This cannot be subjugated to the closed doors where theologians argue and debate. This is not something that does not affect you. What your pastor and Elders and Deacons believe about this directly affects how the ministry of a church is fleshed out.

It affects everything.

1. The Worship
2. The Music
3. The Preaching
4. The Teaching
5. The ministry to Children
6. The ministry of Missions
7. The Evangelism of the the Ministry
8. The Every Day lives of the people in there homes and work

Review

John 3

Nicodemus

LESSON

Biblical Reasons people don't believe

First it must be stated that some believe that the reason that they don't believe is because

1. We are not relevant

1. not practical

new Bible for Millennials
with emojis

a small digital image or icon used to express an idea, emotion, etc., in electronic communication.

2. not relational

3. not methodological i.e. music, drama, entertaining, cool.

2. We are too offensive

1. We are too restrictive i.e. Jesus is only way

2. We are too legalistic i.e. talk about sin

Paul Washer,

"As stewards of the gospel of Jesus Christ, we do no service to men by making light of sin, skirting around the issue, or avoiding it altogether. Men have only one problem: they are under the wrath of God because of their sin. To deny this is to deny one of the most foundational doctrines of Christianity. It is not

unloving to tell men that they are sinners, but it is the grossest form of immorality not to tell them! In fact, God declares that their blood will be on our hands if we do not warn them of their sin and the coming judgment. To seek to preach the gospel without making sin an issue is like trying to heal the brokenness of people superficially, saying, "Peace, peace," when there is no peace." - Paul Washer,

1. Sinners have no spiritual Discernment

I Cor 2:14

But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.

The New King James Version. (1982). (1 Co 2:14). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Mt 13:10–11

- 10** And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?"
- 11** He answered and said to them, "Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.

The New King James Version. (1982). (Mt 13:10–11). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Ro 8:5–8

- 5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those *who live* according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.
- 6 For to be carnally minded *is* death, but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace.
- 7 Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.
- 8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

The New King James Version. (1982). (Ro 8:5–8). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Ac 16:14

Now a certain woman named Lydia heard *us*. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul.

The New King James Version. (1982). (Ac 16:14). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Jn 6:44–45

- 44 No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.
- 45 It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me

The New King James Version. (1982). (Jn 6:44–45). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Jn 8:43

43. Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word.

The New King James Version. (1982). (Jn 8:43). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

2 Cor 4:1-6

Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart.

- 2 But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.
- 3 But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,
- 4 whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.
- 5 For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake.
- 6 For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

The New King James Version. (1982). (2 Co 4:1–6). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

2. Sinners Can't Believe

Jn 12:35–40

- 35 Then Jesus said to them, "A little while longer the light is with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you; he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going.
- 36 While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light." These things Jesus spoke, and departed, and was hidden from them.

- 37** But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him,
- 38** that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke:
 “Lord, who has believed our report?
And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?”
- 39** Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said again:
- 40** *“He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, Lest they should see with their eyes, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn,*

The New King James Version. (1982). (Jn 12:35–40). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

"Of himself, the fallen sinner can no more repent evangelically, believe in Christ savingly, come to Him effectually, than he can create a world. "With men it is impossible" [Mk 10:27] rules out of court all special pleading for the power of man's will. Nothing but a miracle of grace can lead to the saving of any sinner." - A.W. Pink

Oh, my reader, be not deceived on this vital matter; to mortify the lusts of the flesh, to be crucified unto the world, to overcome the Devil, to die daily unto sin and live unto righteousness, to be meek and lowly in heart, trustful and obedient, pious and patient, faithful and uncompromising, loving and gentle; in a word, to be a Christian, to be Christ-like, is a task far, far beyond the poor resources of fallen human nature." - A.W. Pink,

3. Sinners Don't Want the Truth

17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

18 “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

19 And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

Missional statement of Christ First coming

17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

Mt 18:11

11 For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost.

1.Jn 4:14

14 And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world.

The New King James Version. (1982). (Mt 18:11). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

18 “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

18 “He who believes in Him is not condemned

John 5:24 “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.

Rom 5:1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ

The New King James Version. (1982). (Ro 5:1). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Rom. 8:1 *There is* therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

Ro 8:31–34

- 31** What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *can be* against us?
- 32** He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?
- 33** Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? *It is* God who justifies.
- 34** Who *is* he who condemns? *It is* Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.

The New King James Version. (1982). (Ro 8:31-34). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

but he who does not believe is condemned already,

to not believe and already condemned are PERFECT TENSE verbs

could be understood as the one who having not believed is already having been judged.

Your condemnation did not start after you had committed some sins, you were condemned when you entered the world as a sinner.

Jesus did not come to judge, or condemn. That has already happened.

John 3:36

36 He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." ***abides, to remain Pres. Act. Ind***

Rom. 3:23

23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Gal 3:22

22 But the Scripture has confined all under sin

Gal 3:10

10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, *“Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.”*

The New King James Version. (1982). (Ga 3:10). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Rom. 3:9

For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin.

10 As it is written:

“There is none righteous, no, not one;

11 *There is none who understands;*

There is none who seeks after God.

12 *They have all turned aside;*

They have together become unprofitable;

There is none who does good, no, not one.”

The New King James Version. (1982). (Ro 3:9–12). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Ro 5:12

12 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—

4. Sinners love their sin

- 20** For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.
- 21** But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God

Je 13:23

- 23** Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots?
Then may you also do good who are accustomed to do evil.

Here's how John MacArthur responded to the notion of innate human goodness:

False belief systems always seem to downplay human depravity. Some even deny it altogether, insisting that people are fundamentally good. This is a tendency of nearly all quasi-Christian heresies, humanistic philosophies, and secular worldviews. Apostles of those religions and philosophies seem to

think describing human nature in upbeat and optimistic terms somehow makes their viewpoint nobler. That fact alone perfectly epitomizes the blind illogic that goes hand in hand with unbelief and false religion. After all, humanity's moral dilemma should be patently obvious to anyone who seriously considers the problem of evil. As G.K. Chesterton famously remarked, original sin is the one point of Christian theology that easily can be proved empirically.

The fallenness of the human race is a profound, destructive, and universal predicament—inexplicable by any merely naturalistic rationale, but undeniably obvious. Wherever you find humanity, you see ample evidence that the entire race is held captive under sin's corrupting influence.^[1]

John Piper summarizes our text (DesiringGod.org, "This is the Judgment: Light has come into the World"): "The coming of Jesus into the world clarifies that unbelief is our fault, and belief is God's gift. Which means that if we do not come to Christ, but rather perish eternally, we magnify God's justice. And if we do come to Christ and gain eternal life, we magnify God's grace."